

GENUINE
LETTERS

FROM A

VOLUNTEER,

IN THE

BRITISH SERVICE, at QUEBEC.

Rectè Facta refert.

HOR. EP.



L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.


 HE conquest of the CAPITAL
 of the FRENCH POSSESSIONS
 in *North America*, is of such
 importance to Great-Britain, as must
 necessarily afford the highest joy to every
 sincere well-wisher to his country: nor
 can curiosity sleep without wishing to
 know how so happy an event was at-
 chieved.----To satisfy this curiosity, and
 to do justice to those who have so nobly
 distinguished themselves in the cause of
 liberty and their country, is a principal
 motive to this publication.

It

It is hoped, therefore, that the candid public will accept this apology for inviting them to partake of an entertainment, originally designed for only a few select friends.

In the accounts of extraordinary events, given by authority, it has for the most part been thought sufficient to mention the proceedings, and state the issue of an action in general terms, without descending to lesser circumstances; little incidents, however interesting to private people, might not, perhaps, become the letter of a General or Admiral, and consequently find admission into a Gazette.

Indeed, if the care and anxiety that every commander in chief, who is really
attentive

attentive to his duty, must feel in the scene of a critical action be duly considered, it will be readily admitted, that it is almost impossible for him to be attentive to all those lesser circumstances. The officers of any particular regiment can see no more than what passes in his own corps: but the equally anxious, though unemployed by-stander, has opportunity not only for observation, but even for reflection.

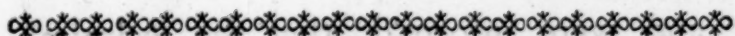
Such a bystander is the writer of these letters: scarce any thing worth notice escaped his observation; and the consequence of observation was reflection. The letters were not originally intended for public view: They have been heard and read by many gentlemen of distinction; and it is by their desires they now travel

travel through the press. Vanity has no share in the composition of the writer : Whether the editor's friendship has attributed to them more merit than they deserve, the candid reader must determine.

GENUINE



GENUINE
LETTERS, &c.



To Mr. J----- W-----.

*Sterling-Castle, in the River St. Lawrence,
two miles below the city of Quebec.*

Dear Sir,

Sept. 2, 1759.

UN E the 13th, the Eccho
arrived with the ships un-
der her convoy at Louif-
bourg, where I stayed till
the 16th: when the Scarborough sailing
with a convoy for the River St. Law-
rence, I took that opportunity to follow

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the

the admiral, who had sailed with the grand fleet on the 4th. After a tedious, but pleasant navigation up this vast river, unus'd to British keels, we arrived, July 17th, at Coudre, an island on the north-side of the river, 18 leagues below Quebec, where we found part of the fleet, and were inform'd, that the Admiral with the rest, and all the land-forces, lay up as high as the town. On the 20th, I went on board the Sterling-castle, where the admiral had hoisted his flag, who received me as usual with assurances of his friendship. I have enclosed you a rough draught, which will give you a better idea of the situation of the fleet and armies, on both sides, than much writing.

The

The Shipping lay about a league from the town, the course of the river there being near due E. and W. somewhat more than four miles broad ; but bending its course to the southward, contracts its stream opposite the town, within the limits of three-fourths of a mile, being confin'd within two points of high land ; the northernmost of which may, with great propriety, be called a mountain, upon whose summit stands a fortress of vast strength, overlooking both the river, city, and adjacent country. At the foot of this mountain, to the N. E. stands the lower town, defended by several batteries, equal with the surface of the water, and so situated, that shipping, in passing by the town, must come within the distance of 4 or 500 yards ; but these two or

three ships might easily silence, were they not cover'd by formidable batteries from the upper town, of forty-two and twenty-four pounders, which, though scarcely more than point-blank from the middle of the river, enjoy so superior a situation, as to defy the cannon of our shipping.

On the other side of the river, upon a high precipice covered with wood, distant from the lower town 1130 yards, and about a mile from the batteries of the upper town, are erected our fascine batteries, from which, since July 13th, when first opened, to the last of August, we have thrown into the town more than 3000 bombs and 22000 shot : of dismal consequence to Quebec,

bec, the pride of America, who now sits mourning in ashes the delusive hopes of her aspiring monarch.

This city, the metropolis of the French dominions in America, and which, for strength, stateliness, and the beauty of her situation, may vie with many in Europe, is the see of a bishop, and contains within its walls seven parish churches, besides a magnificent cathedral. The governor's and bishop's palaces, though not very regular, are fine structures. The college of Jesuits is a noble large building, with spacious gardens ; and all the buildings, both public and private, seem to me composed of free-stone, and erected in the European taste ; entertaining, even in
its

its ruins, the beholder with a beautiful and noble prospect.

I have seen Quebec three several times involved in a total blaze, the effect of bombs and carcasses, not to mention numerous fires of less distinction. The lower town is one entire scene of destruction, and the upper scarcely brags a better situation: the dismal consequences of war, which spares nothing, however sacred, having laid a cathedral in ashes, which would have been an ornament to the proudest city in Europe. The rest of the churches, whose steeples are yet standing, have in part shared the same fate; and the palaces, weakened by the vast number of shot, hourly promise to level their princely roofs, and mix with the ruins of inferior buildings.

So

So much for the present state of this hostile city, the inside of whose walls is the contested prize which is to decide the fate of a western world, and as yet is dubious. How vainly did you imagine this place would surrender at the sight of an English fleet ; supposing the country destitute of provisions, and the inhabitants starving for want of food ! On the contrary, to oppose a handful of men, our whole army counting at first scarcely 9000, we see, between Quebec and the falls of Mont Morenci eight miles below the town, not less than five camps, containing, by accounts from prisoners, of regulars, Canadians, and Indians, near 22000 ; and the whole country on both sides the river, for richness
of

of soil, the various gifts of agriculture, and its innumerable villages seated in the midst of plenty, may vie with the choicest vales in Great-Britain. The island of Orleans, situated below Quebec, extends itself from east to west near twenty-two miles, its breadth being four; dividing the river into two channels, that for the shipping being on the south side, and is two miles broad. The west end of this island is distant from Quebec four miles; between which, the main land, and Point Levi, opposite the town, where our batteries are erected, is stationed all the fleet.

This island, which I have travers'd through every part, is covered with noble crops of wheat, rye, and barley,
inter-

intermix'd with fields of pease, so numerous, that both navy and army have been plentifully served with them six weeks, together with greens and fruit in abundance. The whole is, in short, a granary, containing about 900 farm-houses, divided into five parishes, to each of which belongs a church, that, in the heatness of its gilding and sculpture, exceeds most of the kind in England.

This whole island, together with numbers of towns, villages, and vast tracts of ground covered with grain, for thirty leagues on both sides the river, in case the town does not surrender, is sentenced to destruction; so that

a few days may perhaps exhibit a dismal scene of temples and cottages, corn fields and woods, mixed in one universal blaze.

June 27th, General Wolfe landed some brigades on the east part of Orleans without opposition, and marched to the west, the inhabitants having all fled; and on the 29th, General Monkton landed without obstruction at Point Levi, two miles below the town, on the south shore; the French, for the better defence of it, being encamped on the north. This evening they complimented us with seven fireships in full blaze, top and top-gallant masts set, having a fresh breeze and strong ebb tide: but Providence protected our ships,

ships; for, with all boats manned, we happily towed them ashore, where some of them burnt very fiercely next day.

On the 30th, a body of Canadians and Indians incommencing the dispositions of our troops at Point Levi, having their commander slain, were quickly dispersed. This, and the following days, our forces are employed in making redoubts, and fortifying themselves, both on the main and island.

July 4th, A flag of truce to the commandant, from General Wolfe, published his design of attacking the town on the part of his Britannic Majesty; at the same time signifying, that

it was his Majesty's exprefs command to have the war conducted without practifing the inhuman method of fcalping, and that it was expected the French troops under his command to copy the example, as they fhall answer the contrary.

M. le Marquis de Vadreuil return'd a polite answer to the admiral, affuring him, when the British fleet and army had done gasconading in the French territories, he would return him the two gentlemen belonging to Admiral Durell, took prifoners in the river; intimating his furprife, that with fo few forces he would attempt the conquest of fo extenfive and populous a country as Canada.

The

The next eight days includes a variety of incidents, both sides being prodigiously active : but notwithstanding the efforts of the enemy, General Wolfe landed and entrenched 5000 men, within musquet shot of their breast-works, on the north side, separated from us by a river, which throws itself into the main stream from a rock more than 300 feet high perpendicular, forming, perhaps, one of the grandest cascades in the world.

July 13th, We opened our first battery from Point Levi, of six thirty-two pounders and four mortars, and played smartly upon the town, who returned it. We continued day and night a constant fire from thence, to cover the
erection

erection of more batteries, till the 19th, when the Sutherland, Diana, Squirrel, and two armed vessels, stealing at midnight by the town, sustained a most violent fire ; and the Diana, having her main-top-mast wounded, ran aground ; and though within half a mile of the enemies shot, our brave seamen, at high water next day, brought her off in triumph.

On the 29th, at midnight, the French general M. Montcalm, sent down the river, with tide of ebb, above an hundred fire stages ; but the admiral having advice thereof some hours before, the whole fleet was prepared for the alarm. A fight like this, will indeed inspire the imagination with proper ideas of the
resist-

resistless fury and dreadful grandeur of that consuming element, fire : — such a number of machines, each about eighteen feet square, composed of rafts of timber to a considerable height, filled with the most combustible materials, and arm'd with drags and grapplings to lay hold of hawsers and cables, you must suppose would make a formidable appearance ; each separately representing a lofty pillar of solid fire, and numbers of them uniting would frequently form a bank of fire a quarter of a mile long. These likewise did us no harm, and were, like the fireships, drag'd ashore by the boats.

The last of this month General Wolfe made an attempt to land his forces west
of

of the fall, and force the enemy from their entrenchments : two armed vessels from the transports were sent before noon to bring their broad-sides to bear upon two batteries raised upon the water-edge to oppose our landing, and accordingly did so, together with the Centurion, which ship I had the pleasure to be in during the action ; but she drawing more water than the others, could approach no nearer than three-quarters of a mile, while they got within 500 yards of the French batteries : we kept an incessant fire from the three ships for four hours, till at length some of their guns being dismounted, they deserted their works, and ceased firing : the General's batteries from the mount, during all this time, kept a continual
fire

fire from thirty pieces of ordnance, and almost as many small mortars, upon the enemy within their trenches, who, at the same time, from a large mortar two miles to the westward threw numbers of shells at the ships, and in the midst of our flat-bottomed boats, but without doing much damage ; the Admiral being in person there equally exposed with the meanest seamen or soldiers.

Mr. Wolfe being in the first boat, had soon got 2000 men ashore ; and there was now the greatest prospect of succeeding, when the overbearing courage and impetuosity of the grenadiers totally defeated the General's scheme ; for while he was busy in landing the remaining troops, and making the proper dispositions,

D

tions,

tions, without orders they rushed up the hill, or rather a steep sandy precipice, picketted along, and defended on the top with 8 or 10,000 men, covered with a deep breast-work, incapable of being hurt by our musquetry : these lines and breast-works they have continued from the falls quite to Quebec, being a tract of defensive works more than eight miles long.

Into this snare did our soldiers, not knowing the General's intention, nor waiting his command, heedlessly throw themselves, all of them rushing forward to support their comrades ; when, on a sudden, whilst they were labouring up the hill, sinking in the sand and entangled in the pickets, from the breast-works

works on the brow of the hill descended such a shower of musquetry as is not to be described, which continued without intermission for the space of twenty minutes; when, providentially, though as fine a day as summer can dispence, one of the most heavy showers, for half an hour, that ever I experienced fell unexpectedly, and put a stop to their firing: our men could not advance, and would not retreat; what was most unlucky in their advancing, they got between our fire from the Centurion and a deserted French battery; which, when the enemy saw, they instantly re-occupied, and by that time the General had reduced his men to some order, begun with grape and round to sweep away whole ranks, and play at ducks and drakes amongst

the boats; but death is incapable of putting Britains to confusion: they made a noble retreat, the General ship'd part in the boats, and with the rest marched a-cross the falls: our loss amounted to 400 killed and wounded, and were obliged to burn our two battering vessels.

From August 1, to September 1, have been employed in bombarding the town, in various skirmishes about the falls, where scalping is practised on both sides; as it is likewise by our ranging parties, who scour all the country, and are daily bringing in cattle and sheep by 2 or 300 head at a time.

On

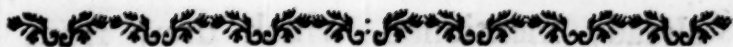
On August the 6th, 1200 men past the town in boats, and being opposed by 4000 of the enemy in making an attempt to land on the 8th we lost several. This action was at Trembleau, eleven leagues above the town; but landing at Chambaud, seven leagues higher up, we defeated a large party, took a great many prisoners, and on the 19th burnt and blew up a large magazine of stores and powder. On the 26th the Leostoffe, Hunter, two victuallers, and an armed sloop, ran the gauntlope by the town, as did, two days ago, the Seahorse and four more vessels; so we now have a tolerable fleet above, and are in hopes of securing three frigates and some transports that are retreated
into

into shoal water twenty-eight leagues above the town.

It is imagined we soon shall storm, having two grand batteries ready to open in a couple of days, and more ships coming up: God knows the success, we shall have warm work, but what British courage can do will be done; the Admiral, General, and whole fleet and army being in high spirits. ****

Dear Sir, accept of this account to treat your friends with; you will, I am certain, have it with the first; it is all I have at present to return for every kindness I have received at your hands. I am conscious you will give me credit when I affirm myself to be sincerely

Your's, &c.



*Extracts from another Letter of
the same Date, addressed to
Mr. M. P.*

THE ravages of war are truly terrible, but may be rendered still more so, if cruelty grows wanton. Happily this is not the temper of Britons, whose natural humanity forbids their sporting with real distress. Some severity became necessary to curb the pride of an insulting enemy, and to convince them we were actually in earnest.

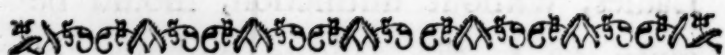
Hence

Hence proceeded those devastations already mentioned, which drew from the Governor of Quebec a sort of remonstrance, addressed to our commanding officer, with a menace to this effect. “ That if the English did not “ desist from burning and destroying “ the country, he would give up all the “ English prisoners in his power to the “ mercy of the Indian savages.”—To this threat, our spirited commander is said to have sent a reply to the following purport.—“ That his Excellency could not be unapprized of his having in his possession a considerable number of fair hostages : that as to the prisoners he might do as he pleased ; but, at the same time, he might be assured, that the very instant he attempted to carry
his

his threats into execution, all the French Ladies, without distinction, should be given up to the delicate embraces of the English tars."—N. B. We have at least three, if not four transports, full freighted with French females ; some of them women of the first rank in this country.

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The



*The following Anecdote, taken from
the preceding Letter, appears
to the Editor worthy of being
remembered.*

NOtwithstanding the check we
received in the action (of the
31st of July,) it must be admitted our
people behaved with great vivacity. I
cannot omit being particular with re-
spect to a singular instance of personal
bravery and real courage.

Captain Ochterlong and Lieutenant
Peyton (both of General Moncton's re-
giment)

giment) were wounded, and fell before the breast-work near the falls.—The former, mortally, being shot through the body; the latter was wounded only in his knee.—Two savages pushed down upon them with the utmost precipitation, armed with nothing but their diabolical knives. — The first seized on Captain Ochterlong, when Mr. Peyton, who lay reclining on his fusée, discharged it, and the savage dropt immediately on the body of his intended prey.

The other savage advanced with much eagerness to Mr. Peyton, who had no more than time to disengage his bayonet, and conceal its disposition.—With one arm he warded off the purposed

E 2

blow,

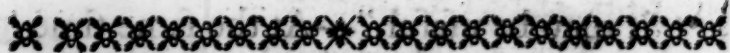
blow, and with the other stung him to the heart : nevertheless, the savage, tho' fallen, renewed his attempts, insomuch that Mr. Peyton was obliged to repeat his blows, and stab him through and through the body.

A straggling grenadier, who had happily escaped the slaughter of his companions, stumbled upon Captain Ochterlong, and readily offered him his services. The Captain, with the spirit and bravery of a true Briton, replied, " Friend, I thank you !— but with respect to me, the musquet, or " scalping knife, will be only a more " speedy deliverance from pain. — I " have but a few minutes to live.— " Go—make haste — and tender your
" fer-

“ service, where there is a possibility,
 “ it may be useful.”—At the same time
 he pointed to Mr. Peyton, who was
 then endeavouring to crawl away on the
 sand.

The grenadier took Mr. Peyton on
 his back, and conveyed him to the boat,
 but not without each receiving a wound.
 —Mr. Peyton in his back, and his
 rescuer another near his shoulder.

To



To Mr. J. W.

Quebec, Sept. 20, 1759.

Dear Sir,

THIS, join'd to my last by the Rodney Cutter, will finish my long narrative; but first permit me to give you joy of the effectual conquest of QUEBEC, which I could not venture to promise in my last.—On the 3d of September, General Wolfe, having before-hand carried off all his artillery and stores, transported all the forces at Montmorencie over to Point Levi, having first set fire to his redoubts, and destroy'd his intrenchments. The enemy

my durst not pass the falls, nor did they attempt to molest him in his retreat: they contented themselves with cannonading the boats, but without any injury to us.

On the 5th, every thing being in readiness, the general march'd with 5000 men along the south shore, some shipping, and all the boats attending upon his motions. The enemy, commanded by the Marquis de Montcalm, were drawn up on the opposite side, and kept a strict eye over all his proceedings. In this manner marching and counter-marching, with an intent to deceive (tho' in vain) our army spent the following seven days.

Be the next day recorded for ever!—a day not less fatal to the flag of insolence and ambition, than glorious to the brave men, who fought in the cause of honour, justice, and Britain.

In the evening of the 12th, or rather a little before midnight, the shipping made a feint upon the turn of the tide, as if they intended to get higher up the river; but the boats being loaded with troops, taking the advantage of the wind, stole down.—The Marquis de Montcalm, who in the dark could barely discern the motion of our larger vessels, was deceived, and discovered his mistake, but too late to redress it.

Before three o'clock in the morning, General Wolfe landed at a fascine battery,

tery, erected to gall our shipping above the town, in so silent a manner, that the very centinels were surprized upon their posts.---But let me not be misunderstood, this was effected by a party of our troops coming on the back of them, for in truth, the enemy fired very smartly from their batteries upon the boats, while they were landing.

The next difficulty he had to surmount, was, to gain the ascent of a prodigious high hill, in which he succeeded, and by break of the morning dawn, the army was regularly drawn up in order of battle, within two musquet shots of the town, and almost under the walls of the citadel.

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With

With respect to the particular dispositions of the respective armies, I doubt not but you will receive, by the same conveyance, a more accurate account, than I can assume to give you : but I can be tolerably perfect as to the action.

The enemy continued a brisk fire at a distance, while ours was kept in reserve. ---The centre, commanded by General Wolfe in person, having fired no more than twice, before the French sensibly experienced the sharpness of their bayonets : And the Highlanders discharging their pieces, fell in sword in hand, *indeed very unpolitely*, and made a havock not to be described.---A total rout ensued

fled ; part of the enemy fled into the woods, part into the town, and the rest fell in the field :---But, alas ! our brave general : HE likewise fell :---crowned with conquest, he smiled in death :---His principal care was, that he should not be seen to fall :---Support me, said he, to such as were near him, let not my brave soldiers see me drop :---the day is our's :---Oh ! keep it---and he died.

Thus fell a noble, a much loved, and a much lamented officer. Britain must regret the loss, but in the day of danger, may she never want a commander with the qualities of a WOLFE, to support her rights, and fight the battles of honour and liberty.---General Moncton is also dangerously wounded.

I have already mentioned the havock made by the Highlanders: the bullet and bayonet are decent deaths, compared with the execution of their swords.--- Happy in escaping unhurt, I travers'd the field of battle, while strewed with bleeding carcasses, and covered with unemployed arms: a neat silver-mounted hanger, fastned to the side of an apparently headless trunk, and which consequently was useless to its original French possessor, attracted my attention. When the body was turned over, in order to unbuckle the belt, my astonishment was indeed great: his head lay under his breast, one stroke upon the back of his neck, having cut thro' the whole, except a small part of the skin

skin of the throat, by which it remained connected with the body.

This is a digression, and I have no time to spare.---The French General, the celebrated marquis de Montcalm, could not survive so fatal a field.---He was carried off early with a shot thro' his body. His second in command met the same fate.

On the 17th, the admiral dropping up with twelve sail of line of battle ships before the town, a flag of truce was hung out, and the same evening it surrendered ; (for by Gar, Monsieur was frightened) tho' the articles of capitulation were not signed till the next day, when we took possession of it.

Our

Our joy upon this occasion is so great, that we scarcely believe it is Quebec; but it is certain that from thence I have the pleasure of transmitting this to you, wrote in the midst of ruin : in some merchant's dining-room, whose present ornaments are two pier and one chimney-glass, shivered with their frames upon the floor ; a marble slab and a turkey ice-jarr, a fretted cieling and pannelled cedar wainscot, in the same shattered condition ; manifestly the effect of a bomb, that had fallen thro' all the upper rooms of the house, into a kitchen on the second floor.

Before I conclude, it may not be amiss to mention my own situation on the important 13th.---I was a volunteer among

mong a large body of seamen, landed about five o'clock in the morning, and appointed as a *corps de reserve*.---But such was their impetuosity to engage, and their resentment at being kept out of danger, that, according to their accustomed politeness, they were perpetually d--mn--g their eyes, &c. because they were restrained from pushing into the heat of the fire, before they were wanted.

Believe me, very sincerely,

Yours, &c.

P O S T-

POSTSCRIPT.

WE hope soon to have an opportunity of communicating more good news, nor shall I fail embracing every opportunity of acquainting my good friend, with whatever appears to me interesting, or entertaining.



